

Census 2010 ~ Understanding Why

The U.S. Constitution requires a national census once every ten years. The first census was in 1790. The Census Bureau must deliver a report of population counts to the President of the United States within nine months of Census Day (on or before Dec. 31, 2010). This report will provide the population counts by state, and the number of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives apportioned to each state. All responses are confidential and protected by law.

The 2000 Census vs. the 2010 Census ~ Then and Now

The 2010 Census is the first census of the 21st Century and it represents a change from prior decennial censuses. The changes include:

- A significantly enhanced Master Address File to modernize census address information.
- A "short form" only census. This is the shortest questionnaire in U.S. history and can be completed in about 10 minutes. More detailed socioeconomic information is being collected monthly from a small percentage of the population through the American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS has been used to collect this more detailed household data nationwide since 2005. It is unlikely that households will be asked to participate in the ACS more than once every five years. During the 2010 Census cycle, some households will receive both the ACS and the census questionnaires. Households should complete both.
- Use of a hand-held computer, a technological innovation using a global positioning system for the Address Canvassing operation that started in April 2009.

The Many Uses of Census Data

Census data are used in many ways. Some examples include:

- Distribution of more than \$300-400 billion annually in federal funds.
- Redistricting of state legislative districts.
- Forecasting of future transportation needs for all segments of the population
- Determining areas eligible for housing assistance and rehabilitation loans.
- Assisting federal, tribal, state and local governments in planning and implementing programs and services in education, healthcare, transportation, social services and emergency response.
- Designing facilities for people with disabilities, the elderly and children.

How You Can Help ~ Complete Counts Committee (CCC)

As a local leader, you can raise awareness of and encourage participation in this historic event. By doing so, you can help your community receive their fair share of applicable federal funds, census jobs and congressional representation. The Census Bureau has recommended communities form Complete Counts Committees (CCC's) to increase participation in your area. The CCC will implement locally based outreach campaigns that raise awareness of the census and ultimately drive participation. The Census Bureau has established a Lake County Office in Painesville at 2163 Mentor Avenue. (440.210.5302). You can contact them for assistance on creating a CCC. You can also visit <http://2010.census.gov/partners/> for free poster downloads, drop in articles and various fact sheets. The Lake County Planning Commission will be hosting a roundtable forum in late January to discuss ideas for maximizing participation in the County. Contact the Planning office if you would like to be notified of this meeting (440.350.2740).

2010 Census Key Dates

February – March 2010
Census questionnaires are mailed or delivered to households.

March – April 2010
Be counted program is implemented. Census questionnaires are available at select public sites for individuals who did not receive one by mail.

April 1, 2010
CENSUS DAY

May – July 2010
Census takers will visit households that did not return a questionnaire by mail.

December 31, 2010
By law, the Census Bureau delivers population counts to the President.

March 2011
By law, the Census Bureau completes delivery of redistricting to the states.